Shortage of Onion

†*49. DR. PRABHA THAKUR:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE *be pleased to state*:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was acute shortage of onion in the month of October in the country which necessitated import of onion;

(b) the names of the countries wherefrom Government imported onion alongwith the value of onion imported, country-wise; and

(c) the reasons for the shortage of onion and the reasons for not overcoming the situation in time?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Although the total estimated production of onion in the country in 2005 is 59.42 lakh metric tonnes which is 4% more than the production in the previous year, arrival in the major wholesale markets in the country in October, 2005 was about 10% less than in October, 2004. This was due to erratic and excessive rainfall particularly in major onion growing States of Maharashtra and Gujarat which adversely affected the kharif onion crop significantly in those States. The overall kharif production has been less by 6.8% in the country as compared to previous year although the area under kharif is more by 3.9% than the previous year. The kharif crop was also delayed in some States because of the erratic rainfall pattern. The Government decided to import onion in view of the sudden spurt in prices in 3rd week of October. No import was, however, made by the Government as the prices soon stabilized and the market arrivals improved.

Pulse production

*50. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Green Revolution which made India self-sufficient in wheat and rice had ignored pulses; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that India imported pulses to the tune of 1701.16 thousand tonnes worth Rs. 2251.20 crores in 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As a result of green revolution since the mid sixties, there has been considerable improvement in the production of different foodgrains, namely rice, wheat, coarse grains and pulses. The impact, however, on all crops has not been uniform. In rice and wheat, India has not only been self-sufficient, but also a net exporter. Pulses, however, are being imported to meet the shortfall between domestic production and demand inspite of increase in production from 9.94 million tonnes in 1965-66 to 14.94 million tonnes in 2003-04.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Cutting down the production cost by SAIL

†*51. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Steel Authority of India has decided to implement a scheme by spending Rs. 400 crores in order to cut down the production cost;

(b) if so, the details of the said scheme;

(c) the percentage of reduction in the existing steel production cost expected after the completion of this scheme; and

(d) the profit of the organisation in terms of amount expected as a result of reduction in the production cost?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) No Sir, there is no specific scheme for investment of Rs. 400 crores to cut down the production cost.

(d) Total cost of production of saleable steel has remained nearly constant during 2001-02 to 2003-04. In 2004-05, total cost of production has increased by 15.5% over the previous year mainly on account of increase in price of raw materials.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.